



**LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL RELATIONS**

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*Katherine E. Doddridge*  
*Senior Staff Vice President*

April 22, 2003

The Honorable Greg Walden  
1404 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Walden:

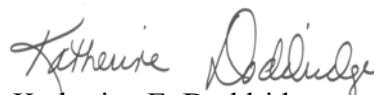
On behalf of the 205,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am writing to express the building industry's strong support for your legislation, H.R. 1662, the "Sound Science for Endangered Species Act Planning Act of 2003." This important legislation requires greater weight to be given to science that is empirical, field tested, and peer-reviewed in making decisions such as listing or de-listing species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

For years, private landowners, who have been burdened with carrying out the responsibilities of the ESA, have repeatedly questioned the science behind the decisions made by the federal agencies implementing the ESA. Because of the vast and often severe social and economic impacts of each ESA decision, the aggregate results of erroneous ESA decisions are very broad, result in harmful effects on the housing market and the national economy, and at times damage the species we are trying to protect. Legislation that requires better science to help prevent accidental or intentional errors in ESA decision-making is long overdue.

In determining if a species is to be listed as endangered or threatened, H.R. 1662 would give greater credibility to scientific or commercial data that has been field-tested or peer-reviewed. Any listing (or de-listing) of the species would need to be supported by data that is actually observed in the field. The bill also calls for recommendations by independent, expert scientific reviewers on proposed ESA actions for a species.

Reauthorization and reform of the ESA has been a priority for the housing industry for many years. NAHB strongly believes that H.R. 1662 is a reasonable and important step that will strengthen the ESA. On behalf of the housing industry, I thank you for your continued strong leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

  
Katherine E. Doddridge

KED/jl